

MOSS

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into politics. "Give back to your community," he told me and my Dad, who was in politics for 30 years, told me the same thing." Murphrey said Moss liked to work and he liked to have fun. "He was a people person who never met a stranger," said Murphrey.

Moss' pastor told of the generosity of the former mayor as a Christian gentleman. The Biblical scripture, "I have fought the good fight" captures the essence of John Henry's life," he said.

"John had a genuine interest in people," said Stallings who described Moss as persistent, patient, and hard working.

Fish who became friends with Moss three years ago, said the former mayor's gift to Gardner-Webb University would live forever in the baseball complex. "I always tried to get him to go fishing but he didn't have time and Mr. Moss said he'd go fishing after he passed on. "So, happy fishing Mr. Moss," said Fish.

Welch recounted family memories of John Moss at the home of her mother and grandmother and during visits "us kids had to be on our p's and q's." "His and Elaine's life was a life of service and investment in our community," said Welch.

Moss had been hospitalized since suffering a stroke on June 7.

Born in Kings Mountain's Park Yarn Mill community, John Henry Moss was the son of the late Manuel and Amanda Moss and was reared by his grandparents, William Henry and Margaret Moss. As a teenager, he got his first taste for baseball playing with friends in a ball field in the Dixon Community near Kings Mountain. He graduated from Kings Mountain High School in 1938, played minor league baseball in the Washington Senators organization in 1940 and was drafted by the Army before Pearl Harbor and served as bodyguard to Allied Forces leader General Ira T. Wyche during World War II. He returned to his hometown in 1945 and sold concrete blocks with his childhood friend, Fred Dixon. Moss served as a general manager with the Detroit Tigers minor league baseball system from 1950-58 and managed a minor league football team, the Wausau (Wis) Muskies, while running a public relations agency. In 1957 he joined International Safety Company and married Elaine Beilke of Wausau, Wisconsin. When they returned to Kings Mountain in 1959, Moss founded the Western Carolina League baseball League and was president of the renamed South Atlantic League for 50 years while calling most of the shots for the 140-employee city government as the elected mayor and chief executive in Kings Mountain.

John Henry Moss' first entry into city politics was as commissioner from Ward 4 where he served for two years and was then elected to eight terms as mayor beginning in 1965. On Aug. 12, 1987 he announced that he would not seek reelection for another four year term but assisted in the transition to Kings Mountain's new system of city manager/council form of government. He became legendary for his ability to garner \$40 million in federal funds to benefit the town and for recruiting industry which provided jobs to people in Eastern Cleveland County. He developed the water reservoir which bears his name, Moss Lake, established in 1974, and his detail of organization to

complete projects resulted in many other accomplishments for the community. He also was the prime mover behind the city's plan for a second lake.

His business activities included the Moss Dixon Block Co., John Moss & Associates, and the Consortium for Progress Inc. He had been owner and publisher of The Cleveland Times newspaper and vice president of the International Safety Company. He also directed sports tournaments in baseball, basketball, the Western Carolinas Horse Show and the Rib Mountain Hill Climb Racing, sponsored by the Road America Auto Racing Club.

At the age of 90 and at meetings just prior to his recent illness he was leading the Cleveland County Sports Commission in planning a 300-acre \$15 million Southern Exposition Sports and Entertainment Center. He also recently presented a handsome donation to Gardner-Webb University which will name a new baseball stadium complex in his honor.

One of the most influential men in all of professional baseball, he was the founder of the South Atlantic League and in December 2007 stepped down as president after 50 years. Under his leadership the SAL grew into one of the largest and most successful minor leagues in affiliated baseball with 16 clubs in eight states. He helped bring professional baseball to 43 different cities by stressing the importance of providing quality, wholesome, family friendly entertainment at an affordable price. As the League's President-Emeritus, Moss was in the process of developing a permanent home for the SAL Hall of Fame. To recognize Moss' contribution to baseball, the SAL retired No. 50 throughout the league, an honor previously accorded only to Jackie Robinson. Stadiums across the Southeast erected bronze plaques to honor Moss's successful efforts.

His selection into five Halls of Fame included the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame and the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame. He was named King of Baseball at the baseball winter meetings in Los Angeles in 1990.

Two former mayors - Scott Neisler and Kyle Smith - join Mayor Rick Murphrey in reflecting on the Moss legacy.

Kyle Smith followed Moss as mayor when Moss retired in 1987 and in whose administration ushered in the city manager form of government with the hiring of George Wood as the first city manager. "When I needed advice I got it," said Smith who said Moss never hesitated to offer advice and encouragement in the transition to the new form of government.

Neisler, who followed Smith in 1991 and served until 1999, said "one of John Henry's proudest accomplishments was the Kings Mountain Housing Authority which brought better housing to many people." He said Moss will be remembered as the mayor who stayed young at heart and never lost his zeal for life, always looking to the future, his legacy a lasting effect on Kings Mountain to be enjoyed by generations to come.

Murphrey, who called Moss a friend and mentor of many years, said his rapport with people was legendary. "Everybody knew John and everywhere I traveled with him he never met a stranger or he knew relatives of that person we met and talked with. He had vision for Kings Mountain and the entire region, a professional, a man of vision we will all miss."

POLICE REPORTS

From 2A

JUNE 30: Billy Wayne Brinson, 25, Clover, SC, driving while license revoked, resist, delay, obstruct and breaking and entering, \$2500 bond, secured.

JUNE 30: Gary Marshall Wade, 25, 900 Grace St., larceny, \$500 bond, secured.

JUNE 30: Jana Gaylene Daniel, 25, 1023 Mountain Crest Dr., felony possession of cocaine, \$10,000 bond,

secured.

JULY 1: Douglas Kenneth Pruitt Jr., 35, 803 No. 23 W. King St., assault on female and possession drug paraphernalia, no bond.

JULY 2: William L. Gamble, 39, 174 Crown St., expired tag, no inspection sticker and driving while license revoked, \$2,000 bond, secured.

JULY 2: Joshua Matthew Ayers, 20, 220 Landry Drive, larceny, \$1,000 bond, unsecured.

JULY 3: Jamie Lee

Grigg, 36, 415 Cherokee St., assault on female and communicating threats, no bond.

JULY 3: William Heinebaugh, 49, Greencastle, Pa., DWI and speeding, \$1000 bond, secured. His 1989 Nissan truck was impounded by police.

CITATIONS

JUNE 29: Johnny Calvin Guiton, Jr., 64, 109 Wave Trailer 11, revoked license, running traffic signal.

JUNE 30: Jona Gaylene

Daniel, 25, 1023 Mountain Crest Dr., failing to stop at scene of accident, no operator's license, no insurance.

JUNE 30: Amanda Lea Schneider, 20, Lincolnton, stop sign violation.

JULY 1: Jeffrey Scott Hill, 46, 115 N. Deal St., possession of marijuana.

JULY 2: Clyde Johnny Hall, 60, Supply, expired tag, revoked license.

JULY 2: Dana Dunn, 32, Bessemer City, expired tag.

JULY 3: Myron Webber, 18, Shelby, speeding.

SERIAL KILLER

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added.

An outstanding warrant from Lincoln County had been issued for the man, identified as Patrick Tracy Burris.

"Officers attempted to serve the outstanding warrant when the suspect pulled a gun and fired at officers," according to a news release from GCPD. "Officers returned fire killing the suspect. Officer J.K. Shaw suffered a gunshot wound to the leg and has been treated and released from Gaston Memorial Hospital."

After the shooting, authorities from South Carolina and other agencies working on the serial killer investigation were called to Gaston County regarding "items of interest" found at the scene.

A Ford Explorer, similar to the description of the one eye witnesses have told police that they saw at the scenes of the killings in Gaffney, was parked outside of the house in Dallas. A "unique characteristic" of the suspect vehicle, known only by police and the eye witness, helped authorities determine that it was the SUV the serial killer had been driving, according to law enforcement.

"Information and evidence collected has identified the subject killed in North Carolina as the same person who has killed five people in our community," Cherokee County Sheriff Bill Blanton said at a press conference Monday night.

"Through forensics we're able to prove today, the weapon he shot the officer with last night is the same weapon that all five of our victims were shot with," he said.

"Investigation shows, Mr. Burris was near all three crime scenes near the time and date of the murders," Blanton said, adding that items taken from the location of the first killing of Kline Cash, 63, on June 27, were found in his possession.

"Our investigation is really going to go into a different gear now. Now we have someone that we can focus on. We want to know where he's been in the last year or so, what he's doing, who he's been with, traveled with and things like that," Blanton said.

OVERBOARD

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on.

"When I arrived on the scene I found the boat and four passengers on shore. The boat had been pulled close to the shoreline and water was being pumped from the sunk boat. After the water was removed from the boat it

was towed to the boat landing by Wildlife officers.

"They were legal with life jackets and fire extinguishers but the boat was overweight by 543 pounds, said Myers. Their total weight of 943 pounds included the weight of four passengers plus fishing equipment, trolling motor, soft drinks and snacks.

Before he reached the scene Myers said a police dispatcher alerted him

that "all are safe." At the scene were four police officers and rescue crews from Kings Mountain, Oak Grove and Bethlehem Fire Departments and two dozen or more people on shore.

"It was scary but thanks to people who helped," said Myers. He said the Mosley boat will need repairs. Wildlife officers said there's no law on the books that allows citations to boat owners who exceed weight limits.



EMILY WEAVER/HERALD
Fireworks crew, left to right, Eddie Childers, Steve Olson, Scott Neisler, Garrett Neisler, Donald Short, Danny Morton and Coy Black stand among their "artillery" before Saturday's show.

SHOW

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dozen men filled an empty baseball lot Saturday behind the YMCA with the explosives that would soon light up the night. Set-up for the nearly 20-minute show takes the crew most of a day to accomplish.

The layout must be just right, fireworks must be placed in the appropriate tubes, fuses and cords should trail in such a way to avoid tripping technicians or being moved and all of the safety measures must be followed. But then those are just a few items on the fireworks show assembly line.

The fireworks are set to music. Neisler picks the tracks himself and studies the accompaniment. He looks for the highs and lows, crescendos and decrescendos in each song and lets the music bring his fireworks to life.

The compilation varies. He has shot fireworks to theme songs, such as Superman, classical music, modern music and other tunes in many genres.

Although Neisler said he's planned shows to live performances, many of the Fourth of July presentations have been accompanied recorded tunes.

Saturday's show featured a lot of swing music, which he said he enjoyed. Big band and swing music blared through the speakers as bursts of reds, greens, blues, yellows, purples and whites jazzed up the night sky.

When he played "God Bless Amer-

ica" by Ray Charles, Neisler shot 10 "golden crossettes," fireworks which burst and expand in other explosions across the evening sky, to accompany the song.

With the help of a computerized system, Neisler is able to electrically key in the shots at precise times, making it fit to music a little easier.

"I've enjoyed it," Neisler said about doing the show. "It's been a lot of fun."

He was a city commissioner when he first got involved with the fireworks over a couple of decades ago. The Kings Mountain Fire Department was putting on the show then.

"They were putting mortars in the ground spaced about 10 feet apart," he said. "I got into it digging holes for the fire department."

Instead of dug-outs for mortars or lighting fireworks on the ground in steel tubes with "loaders" and "reloaders" standing by, most of today's show is fired through special tubes on the back of a trailer bed or from an electric board and pipes on the ground.

Fireworks were shot by hand years ago and not by an electronic device. The crew decided to add music to the line-up in the early 90s.

"I've got a great crew and the show has gotten to be such a size that it would be impossible to do it without them," he said.

His son, Garrett Neisler, is a part of the team. Also on the crew is Coy Black, who has been shooting fireworks with Scott Neisler about 22

years and Donald Short, who has been with him almost as long. Eddie Childers joined the gang about four years ago. Other members, include Steve Olson and Danny Morton, also experienced technicians.

Neisler is certified in both North and South Carolina to shoot fireworks. He and his crew puts on about seven or eight shows a year, including the one at the Cleveland County Fair.

Saturday's show featured close to 1,000 shots from fireworks ranging in size from 1-1/2" to 6". It lasted 18 minutes and 42 seconds, according to Neisler.

Although money has been tight this year in the city's budget and in many wallets, Neisler said that they were able to have more "bang for their buck" this year thanks to fireworks left over from previous shows.

"Our magazine was getting kind of full," he said, adding that he thought Saturday would be as good a time as any to use them.

But then again, Kings Mountain's Fabulous Fourth show is special for Neisler.

"It's fun to be able to do it for your own home town," he said.

After the grand finale, his crew's last two shots exploded into two smiley faces with grins that spread across the sky.

"A lot of people have been having a tough time economically," he said. "we hope this left a smile on their face."